

Mental Health Liaison Group

May 22, 2009

The Honorable Pete Stark
United States House of Representatives
239 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dave Camp
United States House of Representatives
341 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mary Bono Mack
United States House of Representatives
104 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Stark, Camp and Bono Mack:

The undersigned organizations in the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG)— a national mental health advocacy coalition representing children and adults with mental illness, professionals, providers, families and advocates— are pleased to endorse the Healthy Transitions Act of 2009.

Although the transition period between childhood and adulthood (ages 18-26) can be difficult for all youth, the challenges that young adults with serious mental health disorders face are particularly daunting. According to the Government Accountability Office, 2.4 million youth within transition ages have a serious mental health disorder. These adolescents face significant difficulties in acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary to transition successfully to adult roles and responsibilities. They depend on mental health services and supports, without which they are less likely to access employment, housing and education than their peers.

The Healthy Transitions Act helps ease this transition for young adults with mental health disorders by providing access to knowledge, skills, and supports that are necessary for a successful transition to adulthood. The Act would provide technical and monetary assistance to states as they implement plans to develop a coordinated service delivery system in order to maximize continuity of care and access to services. The Act would also establish planning and implementation grants to assist peer support programs and programs promoting independent living, life skills, employment, and education. These programs would result in considerable benefits for young adults with serious mental health disorders who are transitioning to adulthood.

We applaud your ongoing leadership in the mental health arena, and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues to enact the Healthy Transitions Act of 2009.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Children and Families
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association of Pastoral Counselors
American Counseling Association
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
Anxiety Disorders Association of America
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for the Advancement of Psychology
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Child Welfare League of America
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Emergency Nurses Association
First Focus*
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of Mental Health Planning and Advisory Councils
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Organizations
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
Suicide Prevention Action Network USA
United Neighborhood Centers of America
U.S. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association

*not a MHLG member